

If It Bleeds

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If It Bleeds

by [teeth_eater](#)

Summary

Tommy is learning to live with what's happened to him since he had been forcibly taken into space, but it isn't easy. He doesn't want his crew to see him weak, under any circumstances, and letting them see him sick is even worse. The last thing he wants is to go under the knife ever again, even at the hands of someone he considers to be his brother.

Especially at the hands of his brother.

Notes

Howdy and hello! Welcome back to the next multi-chapter installment of Human Error! Book uhhh six now I think!!

If you haven't read the rest of Human Error, I recommend that you do! Context would make this much more enjoyable, and you would avoid spoilers.

Now lets get into warnings. First of all, a disclaimer. I am not a doctor, I am not studying to be a doctor. This account is likely innacruate as I have not experienced the things in the work firsthand. This is a work of fiction, and nothing in it should be taken as medical advice!

cw//

vomiting

blood

general illness and gross stuff

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Fever and Chills

When Tommy wakes up, the first thing he registers is that he does not feel great. There's nothing painful yet, but Tommy can feel his body letting him know that sickness is creeping up on him. The teenager groans and puts his pillow over his face. The last thing he needs right now is to get sick, not when things have finally settled down for the first time in months. He doesn't even know *how* he would have gotten sick in space, with no other humans to transport illness to him. He just hopes it's not gonna be some weird space virus that makes him sprout two heads or something, that would suck. It would be a cool story though.

Tubbo shakes his shoulder to get him up for breakfast and Tommy clenches his teeth and wraps his blankets more tightly around him when the rocking movement sends a wave of nausea up his throat. Yup, definitely getting sick. Tubbo pulls his hand away, and Tommy turns around just in time to see a worried look slip onto his friend's insectoid face. Tommy sits up immediately with a groan. Nope, not happening. He doesn't need the entire crew hovering over him over something as inconsequential as a stomach bug.

"Don't make that face Tubbo, I'm fine," Tommy says, getting up. The blanket stays wrapped around him though. Had someone been messing with the thermostat? It's *way* colder than usual. "I think I ate something I shouldn't have," Tommy says.

"Wouldnt be the first time you've eaten something inedible," Tubbo says with a teasing smile. Tommy shoves his shoulder halfheartedly, not willing to bring his arm all the way out of his blankets.

"Shut the hell up, Phil *still* says I owe him a new sponge."

Tubbo shoots him a mischievous smile before racing off down the hall. Tommy jolts forward before stumbling, bringing a hand to his stomach. A sharp pain has made itself known just beside his navel, making Tommy hiss through his teeth. Tubbo hesitates and flutters back to the human, unsure if this is a trick by Tommy to win the race to the kitchen.

"I- Let's not race today, Tubbo," Tommy says, prodding at his stomach with a frown. "I'll be fine by tomorrow, but I am not looking to throw up in the hallway."

"Sounds like you know you can't win," Tubbo says, but his face stays concerned. They walk out of the room, quickly joined by Ranboo, who gives Tommy a bewildered look upon seeing him.

"Are you okay?" He asks, leaning a bit closer to the human. Tommy pushes his face away.

"Ugh, yes, I'm *fine*. Fuck, you guys are worse than Phil."

"It's just..." Ranboo says, fidgeting with his claws nervously. "You look sick..."

"I'm not sick," Tommy says with a roll of his eyes. "I just ate something weird, you all worry too much."

"If you say so..." Ranboo says, looking unsure.

"I do say so," Tommy replies with a huff.

They make it to the kitchen with no more irritating questions about Tommy's health, only poorly disguised concerned glances. Tommy collapses into his chair to see the rest of his family giving him worried looks. He throws his head back in irritation, screwing his eyes shut against the bright lights of the kitchen.

"Oh don't even start, I'm *fine*," Tommy groans.

"You don't *look* fine," Wilbur says, ears pinning back suspiciously.

"It's just a cold or something," Tommy says, pulling his plate closer to himself. Wilbur makes a rumbling sound in his chest, but doesn't argue any further.

The others seem to have realized that they aren't going to get Tommy to admit that he is feeling anything less than amazing, and so have instead taken to trying to have a normal breakfast. It would almost be convincing, if not for the concerned looks everyone shoots him every three seconds. Tommy picks at his food, only half-listening to the conversation going on around him. He lifts his alien-fork-equivalent to his mouth a couple of times, but the smell of the food makes his stomach lurch dangerously, so he settles for just pushing it around on his plate.

Tommy is very close to just getting up and leaving, the smell of the usually delicious breakfast making his stomach churn, but the conversation around him breaks, and Techno gets up to clear his plate. Tommy follows, eager to get away from the smell.

"Tommy, you've hardly eaten anything," Phil says, feathers puffing up worriedly. Tommy smiles, a touch weakly.

"Upset stomach, I'll be fine by tomorrow." He insists. Phil frowns in his own bird-like way but doesn't stop him from leaving.

Tommy wants to go curl up somewhere until he stops feeling like all of his organs are rebelling against him at once, but Tubbo is still giving him that terribly concerned look, and Tommy refuses to let it be justified. Whether that's a point of pride or an eagerness to keep

any sort of negative emotion out of his best friend's mind is something even Tommy doesn't know.

The three youngest members of the crew scurry off to get their chores done so they can have some *actual* fun before the day is up. Tubbo has work in the greenhouse, plants to tend to, Ranboo has communication reports to write up with trading ships. Phil had insisted that just because he doesn't attend the ICA anymore doesn't mean he can't continue his studies as a diplomat, and he's taken to it like a fish to water. Tommy eyes the burns trailing down Ranboo's face in shiny streaks and thinks that maybe it's a poor idiom.

"Tommy?" Tubbo says suddenly, making Tommy startle. He immediately sucks in a pained breath at the sting of pain that accompanies the movement.

"Huh?"

"You haven't complained at all today, are you *sure* you're feeling alright?" Tubbo asks, only half-joking. Tommy doesn't want to laugh and worsen the pain, but he huffs through his nose a bit where his head is laid on his folded arms.

"I'm fine Tubbo," He insists. He really is. He's had worse, and he doesn't want them poking around in his guts to figure out what's wrong when he's sure it's a stomach bug. The last thing he needs is to be back on the table-

Actually, Tommy would rather kill that line of thought. With fire, preferably. Tommy sinks his face deeper into the confines of his folded arms, hiding his eyes from the light. He's starting to get a serious headache from the damn fluorescents. This entire fancy-ass ship and they can't afford anti-Bluelight bulbs?

He can hear Tubbo and Ranboo moving around, shuffling papers and occasionally knocking things around. The sound of his friends nearby soothes the fear in his chest, and he finds himself drifting off without much trouble. He's gonna wake with a terrible crick in his neck, but he's too tired to care. It's not like anything bad will happen on the ship, not with Techno guarding it, and he's sure his friends will wake him up if something is *seriously* wrong.

Dream is standing over him when he opens his eyes. Tommy lurches backward, falling out of his chair and scrambling back. He whips his head around, looking for his crew, but the room is empty.

"What- how-" Tommy sputters, getting his feet, though his legs wobble unsteadily. Dream chuckles, hands behind his back. He moves in that awful, slithering way that he does,

towards Tommy.

"Not a very hard thing to break into," Dream says. "You should guard things better, human."

"Where-"

"The crew? Not here, at the moment." Dream says with a broadening smile. Tommy knows he does not smile naturally, and he hates the alien even more for it. "They're... indisposed."

Dream flicks a bit of blue blood off of his claws and Tommy growls low in his throat. He goes to lunge forward, to tackle the monster, his own safety be damned, but he feels like his feet are glued to the floor suddenly. Dream has no such issue, leaping for Tommy, claws outstretched. His claws, bright, headache-inducing green fading to white at the tips, plunge into the bottom of his stomach. Tommy falls backward, no longer stuck in place. Dream hovers over him, driving his claws deeper and deeper into his stomach.

On Dream's ship, Tommy had learned how to disconnect his mind from his body to stop himself from feeling the pain of the experiments. He hasn't had to use it since he'd escaped, and he can't remember how to do it anymore. Tommy grits his teeth, a sob trying to crawl up his throat, and stares at Dream's face.

"You were brave, kid." Dream says disinterestedly. "But no one wants damaged merchandise."

Dream slashes his claws upwards and Tommy screams.

Tommy sits up, breathing heavily, face dripping with cold sweat. His hand goes to his stomach. He's in pain, but he's intact. His guts are still firmly within his body. Tommy wants to put his head back down and cry until he can't think anymore, but he is suddenly made aware of a presence beside him when someone touches his shoulder. Tommy flinches without thinking, and the hand retracts. Tommy looks up to see Ranboo and Tubbo hovering over him, both looking equally concerned.

They stare at each other for a few seconds, dead silent.

"What-" Tubbo starts, but Tommy turns his face away.

"Bad dream." He grits out, getting to his feet. He wobbles dangerously for a moment, vision unfocusing at the sudden surge of pain in his stomach. Tommy likely would have crumpled to

the ground had Ranboo not reached out to steady his shoulders. Tommy holds onto the enderian's wrists while he waits for his vision to steady.

"Tommy, you need to go lay down," Ranboo says. Tommy opens his mouth to argue, but falters at the expression on his face. There is no use being prideful when it's hurting him like this. Tommy nods, wincing when it worsens his headache. Ranboo looks surprised at his agreeability, which quickly turns to terror. He exchanges a frantic look with Tubbo, who looks equally bewildered.

"Okay, do you think you can walk?" Ranboo asks. Tommy shrugs. He probably *can* , but it would take so long and hurt *so* badly.

"Alright," Ranboo says, leaning down. "Up you go."

Ranboo sweeps him up into his arms, one arm around his shoulders and another under his knees. Tommy makes a choked noise of pain at the shifting in his stomach, but doesn't argue further. Ranboo apologizes softly and walks to Tommy's room as quickly as he can without jostling his passenger. Tubbo flutters at their side, antennae moving wildly in his concern.

Tommy does his very best not to black out, and he's doing a pretty good job of it. He doesn't want to fall back asleep. He knows nightmares are worsened by fevers but-

Oh shit, does he have a fever?

Tommy turns his face to hide in the fabric of Ranboo's jacket, groaning miserably. Ranboo pats his head awkwardly, seemingly unsure of how to handle this.

Tommy doesn't open his eyes until they return to Tubbo's room and Ranboo has turned off all the lights at Tommy's insistence.

"Okay, we need to go get Wilbur," Tubbo says firmly. Tommy sucks in a shaky breath and grabs Tubbo's arm, making the apisaid halt.

"No," Tommy pants. "Don't."

"Tommy," Tubbo says, looking pained. "We cant handle this by ourselves."

"Please Tubbo," Tommy says, hoping his expression can convey how serious he is about this. "Just... let me sleep and- and in the morning, if it's still bad, you can get help." Tubbo stares at him, unsure.

"What if... while you're sleeping-"

"I'm human, Tubbo, I'll be okay," Tommy says quietly. Tubbo frowns.

"That doesn't mean you're invincible," He says quietly. Tommy holds onto his friend a little tighter.

"Please," He says. "Just until morning."

"And if you're not better I can get help?"

"I promise."

"Okay." Tubbo agrees, though he still looks unsure. Tommy drops his hand to the bed, letting out a breath of relief.

"Thank you." He mutters. He can already feel himself drifting off. He can distantly hear Ranboo and Tubbo speaking to each other.

"Can I sleep here?" Ranboo asks in a whisper. Tubbo doesn't respond verbally, but he must have said yes somehow, because Tommy feels the bed dip down under Ranboo's weight and a warm body curls against his back. Tommy presses further into it, trying to get all the warmth he can from his surroundings. He is still so cold. He feels Tubbo climb into the bed alongside the two of them, and Tommy lets himself drift. He hopes to every god out there that he won't have another nightmare, but he's too exhausted to keep himself awake.

He'll be okay by morning. He has to be.

He can feel the coldness of the metal table biting into his back, matching the coldness of the knife pressed against his bare chest. He's not shaking. He can't shake with the drugs they shot him up with. Some sort of sedative. Tommy hopes that one day they'll give him too much and he can just be done. He thinks about how Sam would feel if he just didn't show up after testing and resolves to hold on a little longer.

The knife digs in. Tommy wants to gasp at the pain, but he can't move. Why they couldn't administer a pain killer along with the sedative Tommy has no idea. Maybe they think humans can't feel pain. Maybe they just don't care.

He opens his eyes, waiting for them to adjust to the bright light shining in his eyes. It's sort of like being in a dentist's chair, if the dentist wanted to dissect you. Tommy blinks the blue

spots out of his eyes and shifts his vision to the person in charge of destroying him.

Blue, almost transparent skin fills his vision, dark hair held back by a knitted hat, cheerful yellow sweater. The front of it is covered in rich red blood. Tommy can't open his mouth, but if he could he would be screaming. The knife drives deeper, but Wilbur doesn't seem to care much at all, instead just staring down at Tommy's insides with a detached sort of fascination. There is a small smile playing at his lips. He's humming something cheerful.

The knife drives deeper still. Tommy can't speak, there is a muzzle holding his jaw shut, but if he was free he would be begging, sobbing, screaming. Asking why someone he has grown to love like a brother would take him apart like this.

Wilbur twists the knife.

Tommy wakes up, jaw clenched to hold in a shriek of terror. He sits up, his grip white-knuckles the sheets. He feels disgusting, like there is a thick sheet of grime on his face. The pain hasn't stopped, it's only gotten worse. Tommy's eyes dart to the clock. Three more hours until morning. He's still okay. There's still time.

Tommy's body chooses that moment to rebel.

Tommy throws the blankets off of himself and scrambles to the bathroom in socked feet, nearly cracking his head open on the doorframe. He collapses in front of the toilet, falling to his knees and gripping the sides of the bowl. He coughs a couple of times before vomiting, intensely thankful that he hadn't eaten since the night before. He spits into the water and flushes it before lying down on the floor, not willing nor able to get up and go back to bed. He has to be okay by morning, if he isn't-

He thinks back on the nightmare he'd had, and he knows- *of course*, he knows that Wilbur is nothing like the poachers on the last ship, but that knowledge doesn't stop his brain from having a near meltdown whenever he thinks about it.

He rolls onto his side.

What would have happened if they didn't have Tubbo? If they couldn't translate? If they still thought Tommy was as animalistic as the day he arrived, setting simple traps that would barely hold a squirrel? Would he have been subjected to the same fate that he'd suffered on Dream's ship?

He knows humans are fascinating species, how could he forget? It's the whole reason he's damaged the way he is, and Wilbur is a scientist. If he had never known Tommy was sapient... or if he had known, if it had just been him and Tommy on the ship. What would have happened?

It's a terrible thing to think about, but as much as Tommy loves Wilbur, he doesn't know.

It's fucking terrifying.

Disorientation and Nausea

Chapter Summary

i think the chapters for if it bleeds will be shorter but come out more frequently. i think that's the only way I'm gonna be able to update at the speed that i want to.

in other news, please heed the warnings
mentions of vomit
mentions of death

Tommy jolts awake with a gasp when something pokes into his side, swallowing down a wail of pain. He opens his eyes to see Wilbur standing over him once again. Tommy flinches back, thinking, for a moment, that he's back in his nightmare, but no. Wilbur has only concern on his face.

"Wanna explain why you're sleeping on the bathroom floor?" Wilbur asks, tail waving behind him lazily. Tommy wants nothing more than to close his eyes and go back to sleep, but there is artificial light streaming in from the hallway. His grace period is over.

"A man can't sleep where he wants?" Tommy asks, rolling onto his stomach and hoping that Wilbur doesn't notice the way he stiffens in pain. Wilbur chitters out a laugh and pulls Tommy to his feet.

"You feeling any better?" Wilbur asks. Tommy blinks quickly, trying to stop his vision from swimming.

"I feel fantastic big man," Tommy says with a grin.

"Good to hear it," Wilbur says, equally cheerful. The phantling turns and heads to the kitchen for breakfast, and Tommy is quick to follow.

He passes the mirror on his way out the door and winces. He's lucky that his crew doesn't know how humans look when they're sick, or the ruse would be up before it had even started. Tommy is pale and shiny with sweat, his hair sticking to his skin. He's sure if someone put a hand to his forehead they'd come away with a third-degree burn. He turns away from the mirror, trying not to think about how the last time he'd looked like this had been right after he'd escaped Dream's ship. It only half-works, but he's focused enough on not collapsing in the doorway and giving away his condition that he doesn't dwell on it for too long.

He blinks and he's in the kitchen. Tommy sways on his feet uncertainly. It's been... a long time since he'd been so in his own head that he's missed time, but it isn't *that* unusual in the grand scheme of Tommy's clusterfuck of a life. Techno's mouth is moving, but Tommy is suddenly having trouble translating Common. It's *something* about food, so Tommy nods and sits down, hoping that was the right answer. He stares down at the plate in front of him, trying to ignore the roiling of his stomach.

He is saved from having to risk eating something when Ranboo and Tubbo come barreling through the door, falling over each other in panic. Tommy whips around at the noise, startling slightly more awake. He resists the urge to smack himself in the face. He needs to be present. He said he would be fine by morning, and it's morning. He's *fine* .

"Where's-" Tubbo begins, eyes wide and nervous, before catching sight of Tommy sitting at the table and relaxing, melting into a buzzing puddle on the floor. Ranboo looks equally relieved, his ears drooping when he lets out a long breath.

" *There* you are Tommy," Ranboo says, walking forward and taking his seat beside the human. "We thought something had happened to you."

"Nope," Tommy says with a smile. He hopes it doesn't look like a grimace. "What did I tell you, just a bug." Ranboo smiles too, softly.

"Well I'm glad you're okay," He says. Tommy scrunches up his face in mock disgust.

"Ew, don't get all sappy on me, Ranboob!" He groans, shoving the enderian away. Tubbo chuckles and takes his seat on the other side of Tommy, digging into his breakfast.

Tommy spends the rest of breakfast putting all his energy into not throwing up, taking deep, even breaths in an attempt to quell the rising nausea that threatens to consume him. He stays half-focused on the conversation going on around him, though he processes none of it. He laughs when it's appropriate, he nods when someone asks him a question, he hums in surprise when someone gets to a particularly unbelievable part of their story.

He seems to have them convinced, for now, which is great. Tommy would celebrate more if it wouldn't take any of his focus off of his own breathing. Time seems a bit more... liquid than usual, so it feels like hours and no time at all when his crewmates start clearing their plates. Tommy gets up, following them. He hasn't eaten, but he's doing a good enough job of hiding his discomfort that none of them notice. He hopes. It's kinda hard to think enough to read their expressions.

Tubbo is by his side suddenly, speaking to him. Tommy snaps back into his own brain long enough to process what the apisaid is saying.

"-you're alright?" Is all he catches, but he can infer the context.

"I'm right as rain," Tommy says in English.

"What?"

"I'm good," Tommy repeats in Common, a bit sheepishly.

"You didn't eat," Ranboo points out from his other side, making him startle. He hadn't heard the enderian walk up next to him. How he can move that silently *and* be that tall Tommy will never understand.

"I'm *better* , not perfect," Tommy defends. It's a lie, of course, he feels *much* worse than he had last night, but he's not telling *them* that. Ranboo chirps uncertainly, wringing his hands. Tommy waves away his concern, gritting his teeth at another stab of pain that rolls through him.

"I said I would be fine, and I am," Tommy lies. "Come on, there's shit to do other than dote on me."

They go about their day relatively normally, to Tommy's relief. There are still suspicious glances thrown his way by Tubbo, and worried ones from Ranboo, but besides that, the two other teenagers don't pester him too much about his health. Tommy doesn't stay quiet this time, he's learned his lesson from yesterday. Him staying silent may as well be throwing himself on the autopsy table for all his friends are concerned. It doesn't matter that every time he speaks the vibrations send another sharp surge of pain through his gut. He's fine. It's *fine* .

Tommy doesn't stop to take deep breaths after a while, not after getting a suspicious look from Tubbo. The pain is starting to consume his entire mind, not letting him focus on anything else. He still nods his head in response to questions and laughs when he needs to laugh, but he seriously needs to lay down. He's fine, though. He's just tired.

"I'm gonna use the bathroom," Tommy says. Or, at least he tries to say. It comes out more as: "'m gon' th' bathr'm", but that's beside the point. He walks to the hallway as dignified as possible while in the sight of his friends, but the moment he disappears behind the wall of the bathroom he collapses against the wall. The movement makes his stomach fold a bit, and he bites into his arm to stifle the scream of pain that rises up in him. His mind is filled with a repeated mantra of '*dont throw up, dont throw up, dont-*'. It works for a while, he manages to control his breathing and swallow down the acid climbing up his throat.

His partially successful meditation is broken when someone knocks on the door. He hisses through his teeth at his focus on keeping his body together when it feels like it wants to explode being broken.

"Occupied," Tommy grits out in English.

"Are you okay?" Ranboo asks, sounding worried. "You've been in there for a long time."

"I'm okay," Tommy gasps.

"Tommy..." Ranboo says, worry turning into fear. "You don't sound good, I'm gonna open the door now."

"Don't," Tommy chokes out, sliding further down the wall, arm curled around his throbbing stomach. "Don't, *don't* . Stop."

The door opens and Tubbo is immediately at his side, leaving Ranboo to stand at the door staring at the scene in horror. Tubbo grabs one of his hands and Tommy latches onto the comfort eagerly. Normally he'd be afraid of grabbing his friend too tight and hurting him, but Tommy feels too weak to crush a grape right now, let alone break through his friend's exoskeleton.

"Tommy, we know you're not okay. You need to tell us what's wrong." Tubbo says, sounding near tears. Or whatever the apisaid equivalent of tears is.

"I don't *know* ," Tommy admits with a dry sob. "I don't know, it *hurts* ."

"You're warm- shit, *shit* . He's got a fever," Tubbo snaps to Ranboo, who looks bewildered. "Go get Phil." Tubbo orders. Ranboo doesn't hesitate to obey, eager to be of any help he can be. Tommy is suddenly aware that he's gaping like a dying fish. Is he dying? Is the mouth gaping a fish thing or a dying thing? Tommy doesn't know, he's never died before. He's come pretty damn close, though.

"Am I dyin'?" Tommy breathes, voice dry like rivergrass in summer. Tubbo might know. He knows a lot of things. Tubbo's neck-fluff puffs up suddenly, making him look sort of like an angry cat. Tommy reaches out to touch it, but Tubbo puts his hand back down gently.

"No," Tubbo says, voice shaking slightly. "No, of course you're not dying."

Tommy hopes he's right, for all of their sakes.

Phil

Chapter Summary

a phil chapter for you my chitlins

and i know i haven't been updating as much as id like but I'm doing my best! school is my top priority right now, so chapters will be slower than in the summer

also. kristen!! giant space wife.

warnings

- a lot of death talk

- vomit mention

- general distress

A few months ago, Phil may have been startled at being grabbed from behind and teleported away from the paper he'd been writing, and sure, he was a bit bewildered, but it was far from the strangest thing that has happened on this ship.

Ranboo doesn't say a word in greeting, just teleports behind him, wraps his long arms around Phil, and disappears again, now with Phil in tow. He barely has a moment to process the nauseating swirling of whatever in-between Ranboo had taken him to before he's being set down again, now on the cold floor of the bathroom. Phil presses a hand to his head to soothe the dizziness that has overtaken him, before the smell of sickness reaches him and he snaps his gaze upwards. Tommy lays slumped against the floor, pale and wide-eyed. Phil shuffles forward until he's by Tommy's side, mirroring Tubbo, whose neck ruff is fluffed up as much as it can go. Phil makes a soothing trill in his throat, distractedly trying to soothe the youngest members of his crew while he looks over Tommy to see what the cause of his sickness could be. There are no wounds, and Phil doesn't smell any infection, so it must be an internal sickness. A worsened version of whatever stomachache he had developed. Phil takes a deep breath, trying to calm himself. Panic will do no good for any of his wards, he needs to be calm.

"Tommy?" Phil says, keeping his voice steady. "You not feelin' too good, mate?" Tommy shakes his head miserably, looking as though he is barely clinging onto consciousness.

"That's okay, let's get you off the floor and into a real bed, huh?" Phil suggests. Tommy shakes his head.

"No, don' wanna throw up," Tommy mutters.

"We'll get you a bucket, but you cant stay on the floor, okay?" Phil says firmly. Tommy hesitates for a moment but nods his head. He isn't in the state to argue anyhow. Phil rattles his tail feathers anxiously at Tommy's lack of spark and he turns back to Ranboo.

"Go get Techno," Phil murmurs, not taking his eyes off his youngest crewmember.

"I can't teleport," Ranboo says quietly, apparently unwilling to break the tense silence of the bathroom. "I teleported twice in like five- five seconds, I'm out of commission for now," Ranboo admits. Phil curses under his breath in his mothertounge, a series of harsh clicks. He doesn't have his comm, it's back on the desk that he'd been teleported away from, and he's not willing to leave Tommy's side to get Techno *or* the comm, not when his youngest is shaking on the ground.

"I can carry him," Ranboo suggests hesitantly. Phil's wings twitch in confusion as he eyes up the lanky enderian.

"You won't drop him?" Phil questions hesitantly. He doesn't want to put Tommy through any more pain if it can be managed.

"No, I carried him yesterday and it was fine," Ranboo says quietly. Phil looks to Tubbo for confirmation and gets a short nod from the apisaide. Phil repeats the motion back to Ranboo, and the enderian wastes no time in scooping the trembling human up into his arms. Tommy takes a shuddering breath at the movement but doesn't protest more than grabbing onto the front of Ranboo's shirt in a white-knuckled grip.

Ranboo looks down in terror for a bare moment before Phil clicks out something frantic, a phrase meaning 'hurry up' in his own tongue. Ranboo startles and starts carrying the feverish human to his room. Tommy breathes roughly, terror and pain clouding his eyes. Ranboo makes quiet, soothing chitters in the back of his throat, and Phil mirrors him with comforting trills of his own.

By the time they lay him on top of his unmade sheets, Tommy is fully unconscious, breath still frighteningly raspy, but even and slow. Phil takes a shuddering breath of his own, smoothing down his ruffled feathers with no small effort on his part.

"Okay," Phil says carefully. "Tubbo, go get Techno and Wil." Tubbo opens his mouth to protest, but Phil has slipped into the sternness of his role as captain, and the apisaide must see that. Tubbo nods once and rushes out of the room to find the two remaining crew members.

Phil crawls into the bed to curl against his youngest, wrapping a wing around him, hoping to stop the trembling that wracks his frame. Tommy reaches up to grab at his feathers with

shaking fingers, half-awake.

"Cold..." Tommy breathes. Phil coos, hoping to bring him some comfort even if they don't belong to the same species.

"I know, you'll be okay," Phil says quietly. He hopes fate does not make him a liar.

Ranboo stands at the end of the bed, clawed hands wringing over each other nervously. Phil chirps an invitation into the nest, before cleaning his throat to switch into a language the enderian understands.

"Come lay down," Phil murmurs. "He's cold."

Ranboo lays on Tommy's other side, tail curled around the younger boy, his eyes wide and fearful. They lay in silence for a few moments longer, Phil combing his fingers through Tommy's hair in the way he knows is soothing for humans.

The door opens, but Phil does not turn to look. He doesn't need to guess who has entered.

"Phil," Techno greets, voice grim. Phil hisses quietly at the piglins tone. Tommy is not *dying*. There is no need to sound like that.

"What's happening to him?" Wilbur asks, voice hushed even in its panic.

"You're the scientist," Tubbo snaps, wings twitching erratically.

"*You're* the one who studied humans!" Wilbur snaps back, just as tense.

"Boys," Phil says lowly. His crew quiets, they know better than to go against his words in moments like these.

Phil waits for more weight to join the bed, but neither Wilbur nor Techno join them.

"I need to... I need to go figure out what's happening." Wilbur says quietly. "Tell me if he... if he gets worse."

Wilbur doesn't wait for an answer before turning and walking out of the room. Phil knows that information is valuable to them right now, especially considering how little reliable research has been done on humans, and most of it not about how to heal them, but Phil gets

the sense that Wilbur would rather be anywhere but here. Do anything but watch his little brother shaking and sick. Phil doesn't blame him.

Techno clears his throat.

"I'm gonna go too," He says gruffly. "Someone needs to keep watch." He leaves as well, steps heavy. Phil curls his wings tighter around Tommy, chirping in a way he hopes is soothing. Ranboo is letting out chirps of his own, though they sound strange and distorted when compared to Phil's.

Phil can feel himself falling asleep, no matter how hard he tries to fight it. Laying here with his youngest curled around him is soothing despite the unfortunate circumstances, and it doesn't take long before he drifts off.

When he wakes up, everything is much worse.

Tubbo is shaking him awake, looking terrified, Phil is up in an instant, cursing himself for falling asleep.

"What happened?" He mutters, voice still rough with sleep.

"Tommy's getting worse," Tubbo gasps, voice trembling. Phil could have guessed as much, but he won't fault Tubbo for his vagueness, not when his hands are shaking like they are. Phil shifts his wing to see his youngest better and chitters a curse at what he sees.

Tommy's eyes are open, glazed over and staring at the ceiling. He trembles all over, sickly pale and covered in a sheen of sweat. Phil takes a moment to just sit and process the fact that his youngest is suffering and he has *no* idea how to help him. He takes a deep, shaky breath in and gets to his feet.

"I'm going to go see how Wilbur's research is going," Phil says as calmly as he can manage. "You two stay with him, call me if anything happens."

'Call me if he stops breathing,' goes unsaid.

Ranboo and Tubbo both make small noises of agreement, and Phil sweeps out of the room, holding himself as tall as he can. He needs to be an unshakeable figure right now.

The moment he's out of earshot, he collapses against the wall, hand to his chest, breathing hard. He's not quite to panic attack levels yet, but if he wasn't leading his crew he may already be there. He stares up at the ceiling, wings splayed all around him. It has been a long time since he's prayed for something so dire, not just for little things. *'Thank you's* and *'I love you's*, and wishes for Tubbo's plants to grow well. It's been so long since he's felt this desperate.

"Lady Death," He begins, doing something so few would do. To call the Lady's attention is a foolish thing to do for most normal people, but he's not normal, he's had her attention for a long while. "Darling, my light, my power, my love, my-" He feels her laugh, distantly, and knows she is listening. He smiles tensely, and then he feels her frown, cupping her hands gently around his worry, around his fear for his flock. "Lady Death, I- Tommy, the human I've told you about, he's... sick. He's- Lady there is so little information on humans- on *helping* humans, I don't know- I don't know what to do. Please, *please* Kristin, if there is anything you can do for him- or if you can guide us to a cure, please. He- He's been through so much, love. He deserves to find his own happiness."

He feels her concern for both him and Tommy run through him like water in a river. He feels her reassurance, her hands gentle and all-encompassing around him. It may seem... unorthodox, to ask the Lady of Death to save someone's life, but Phil is her Angel, he knows how her power works. She does not just bring death, she controls it. She can part it around Tommy like a stone in a river. He feels the phantom sensation of a giant, soft hand cupped against his back.

'I'll do my best,' rings in his ears, and he relaxes slightly. It's not a promise, because gods never promise, but it's close.

He stands up, not severing his link with his Lady. He appreciates the comfort she offers, and it doesn't take much of her attention to press against him while she weaves the threads of life and death. He walks towards Wilbur's lab, trying to keep his feathers from bristling with worry. Kristin smooths them down with a gentle fingertip from time to time, the sensation making him smile.

His smile fades when the door to Wilbur's lab slides open. The phantling is hunched over his desk, surrounded by papers and open books. He's frantically scribbling something down in the margins of some thick textbook, mumbling to himself.

"Any luck?" Phil asks from the doorway. Wilbur jumps and whips around, knocking his hand on the edge of the desk and swearing softly as he shakes it out.

"No," Wil says, tail lashing as he turns back to his slew of papers. "Every fucking thing in here is about how to *kill* humans," He growls. "Nothing about *healing* them."

"Have you tried a reverse engineer approach?" Phil asks, walking up beside Wilbur.

"That's what I'm working on right now," Wilbur sighs, gesturing to his seemingly endless array of notes. "But none of it's very helpful. '*Humans are weak against fire*', yeah. *Everything* is weak against fire. It's fucking *fire*."

Wilbur puts his head on the desk. Phil has known him long enough to know when he's upset, and it's clear the phantling is barely holding back a breakdown right now.

"He's gonna be okay," Phil says quietly. Wilbur sniffles.

"You don't know that," He says, not lifting his head up from the table.

"You're right," Phil says with a deep sigh. "I don't, but I know that he's survived much much worse with much less to lose. He's got us. We're gonna do everything we can."

Wilbur sucks in a shaky breath and sits up.

"You're right," He murmurs, picking up his pen again. "You're right. Is he doing any better?"

"No," Phil says grimly. "He's getting worse."

Usually, Phil tries to be positive. When he delivers bad news he'll try to tack something positive onto the end to soften the blow. There is nothing he can say here, nothing to do but sit in the terrible reality of the moment. They are silent and still for a few seconds, something like grief settling in their chests.

Phil's comm rings, and he doesn't have to look to know it's Tubbo. He snatches the device off of the desk and holds it to his ear, sending a silent prayer that Tommy hasn't stopped breathing.

"He's throwing up again," Tubbo says, sounding scared. Phil rattles his feathers. He shouldn't have left his youngest alone right now, that had been selfish of him.

"I'll be right there," Phil says as soothingly as he can. "Keep him on his side if he can't sit up, okay?"

"Okay," Tubbo says. He sounds young.

They're all so damn young.

Techno

Chapter Summary

howdy and hello my darlins. yall really loved when i called ya chitlins huh? i did not expect that but I'm glad you got a kick out of it.

classic cw for this chapter, a lot of death, sickness talk. mild self harm during a panic attack

There are generally considered to be two reactions to stress, not just in humans, but in most intelligent creatures. Fight or flight, and Techno has never been one to resort to running. Here, though, with his youngest crew members, one of the six people he has sworn to protect, he has no one to fight. Whatever illness has Tommy laying on his side, curled up and shaking is not something he can take a sword to. He wishes it was. He sits in his training room on one of the benches that line the walls and sharpens his sword. He probably isn't doing it right, spaced out as he is, and it's likely to do more harm than good in the future, but he needs to feel the weapon become more deadly under his hand while he stares at his blank-eyed reflection in the polished metal.

With the sword the sharpest and shiniest it's been in a while, Techno stands. He examines the blade, turning it back and forth in his hands. It's beautiful. He used to take such pride in making sure his weapons were in perfect condition. A sort of bragging right that he could both kick anyone's ass *and* have time to maintain the tools he used to do it, but more and more of his time has been spent with his family in the past six months. He grips the sword a little tighter, dread pooling in his gut. He runs a very real risk of losing one of those family members right now. Of course, it would be absolutely heartbreaking to lose any of the crew, but Tommy is the *youngest*. Maybe he's a slave to his instincts, but the youngest of a sounder is meant to be the most protected.

Techno frowns, teeth flashing. He hasn't done a very good job of that, has he?

He lunges forward with a bellowing war cry, slashing his sword across the chest of the dummy in front of him. The stuffed figure falls to the ground, fluffy white innards spraying out over the matted floors. Techno does not stop there, twirling around and bringing his sword down on everything he can see.

When he runs out of training dummies, he moves onto the wall, heedless of how badly he is damaging the blade by slashing it against metal, ignoring the sparks that fly into his thick skin, how close they come to his eyes.

It isn't until the door slides open that Techno realizes he's been screaming. The roaring baritone of his own language likely echoing through the entire ship even with the soundproofing that had been installed. Phil stands in the door, a heartbroken expression lining his face. Techno immediately rises to his full height, rare terror filling him.

"Tommy-" Techno begins, fearing the worst.

"Tommy is *fine* ," Phil says, walking forward, wings flaring slightly in his worry. "I'm worried about *you* right now."

Techno blinks, confused.

"Why?"

"Look at you," Phil says, taking Techno's hands in his, making him drop the sword. "You're *crying* ." Techno can't check with Phil holding his hands, but he can feel the warmth of his tears tracking through the short fur on his face. Once he realizes it, Techno breaks, curling into the elytrian, which may have been comical at any other time. Techno drops to his knees, and Phil follows, kneeling next to him as the piglin sobs.

"I don't want him to die," Techno whispers, voice choked by rare tears.

"He's not going to die," Phil says, but Techno can hear grief in his words, lining his voice like fine silk.

"You don't know that," Techno says. He knows he sounds petulant, but how could he not be childish in moments like these. Terrified and out of control, both of himself and the danger that chases the youngest member of his sounder.

They are silent for a minute, holding each other and softly grieving for someone who isn't yet gone. Then, Phil speaks.

"I'm thinking of going back to the ICA," He admits in a whisper. Techno rears back immediately.

"What? Why? We need you *here* ," Techno protests, holding onto Phil a little tighter.

"Wilbur's not getting any leads from his own research," Phil says, pressing his face into Techno's shoulder. "The ICA has more information on humans than anywhere else, if we're going to figure out what's wrong with Tommy, and how to help him get better, the ICA's our best bet."

Techno huffs, exasperated.

"The last time you went there, you killed half the faculty. I don't think they're going to welcome you with open arms."

"They don't need to welcome me," Phil says darkly. "If they have information on what's going on with Tommy, I'll find it."

"Phil. The last thing we need is you getting arrested for information they might not even have, do you really think we could hold ourselves together without you right now?" There is a long silence, Phil not removing his face from where it is pressed into Techno's shoulder.

"I know," He says finally, pulling away. He looks exhausted. Techno opens his mouth to ask if Phil wants to sleep in shifts, letting Techno take watch, but before he can get the words out, Phil's comm crackles to life, making both of them jump.

"Report," Phil commands immediately, and Ranboo speaks, shaky and breathless.

"He's saying the pain's getting worse." Phil gets to his feet immediately, Techno is quick to follow suit.

"Do you have enough magic to teleport?" Phil asks, voice slipping into the stern cadence he always adopts when things are at their worst.

"Yes," Ranboo says in between gasping breaths.

"We're in the training deck, get me to Tommy's room." Phil orders. There is no confirmation from the other end, but there is a '*vwoop*' sound and the sudden smell of ozone in the air, so Techno is pretty confident that Ranboo has arrived.

He doesn't have time to turn around and confirm his suspicions, because a hand grabs the back of his cape, and with a tug in his stomach he's standing over Tommy's bed. Techno shakes his head a few times to clear the dizziness that's overtaken him before lending all his focus to the situation at hand. Tommy is laying on the edge of his bed, curled into the fetal position with his arms wrapped around his stomach. He's pale and shaking, but his eyes are open wide, full of pain, and staring at the wall. Tubbo lays pressed against his back, a hand on his chest. The apisaid stares at the wall as well, though his eyes are not filled with pain like the human's are. Techno realizes with a jolt that Tubbo has his hand on Tommy's chest to make sure he doesn't stop breathing, and the wave of dread that hits him is nearly enough to send him out of the room.

Phil is already fretting over Tommy, taking his temperature and offering water that the human refuses, too nauseous to even drink, Ranboo stands in the corner, muttering something that sounds like a prayer in a language Techno could never begin to understand, Tubbo lays still, making sure his best friend stays alive.

Techno stands.

There is *nothing* he can do.

He doesn't know how to heal, he's a *fighter* . His god does not help the sick, no one in their right mind would pray to the Blood God to save someone. He *takes* , and it is up to his worshipers to do the healing, and more often than not the injured are left to die. It is a part of his culture that Techno has never resented before now, watching Phil flit around Tommy with deft hands, knowing what to do and how to do it with all the confidence of a surgeon.

There is nothing to fight, no way that Techno can help at all. He's *useless* .

Techno turns and walks out of the room, anger winding into the grief that makes his bones ache. He slams the door behind him, the maelstrom of emotions clouding his mind only making a small amount of room for the guilt of startling his crewmates. His breath is coming in harsh pants, teeth bared and hands coming up to tremble at his sides. He wants to scream. He wants to tear apart whatever has caused Tommy to lay there near death, but there is nothing. They don't know *what* is causing his illness, or if it's curable.

The idea of it *not* being curable, off Tommy slowly wasting away on that bed until there's nothing left of him but blank eyes and pale skin, makes Techno collapse against the wall, whimpering in a way that he's sure makes him sound like a shoat, but he's too panicked to care. His hands come up to yank at his ears, hoping that the pain will ground him. It doesn't, so he yanks again, this time letting out a grunt of pain. It aches, and it's sure to give him a headache later, but it isn't helping. He can tug his ears until they come clean off and Tommy will still be laying there on that bed. Tommy would still be *dying* -

Techno goes still at the traitorous thought. It is something weighing heavy on the minds of all the crewmates, but none of them are willing to voice it. The idea that Tommy has been

afflicted with something incurable is... terrifying, but the fact that it could be something completely innocuous if they just knew *how* to treat it is worse. If Tommy hadn't been taken away from his home planet, he would probably be fine right now. A little nauseous, but chock full of whatever medicine humans have for this illness. Tommy isn't even well enough to tell them anything, too sick to speak most of the time, and when he does it makes little sense. He's not a doctor, he was barely a teenager when he was taken, how would he know the ins and outs of human medicine?

Techno takes a deep, shuddering breath and dips his head. He wants to kill something, he wants someone to break into the ship so he can prove his usefulness. He wants Tommy to live, he wants him to reach whatever the human stage of adulthood is. They don't exactly know when that is, but they know Tommy's not there yet. Techno gets to his feet, leaning on the wall to support his shaking frame.

He knows nothing of medicine. He's not a healer, but the ship still needs a guard with everyone else busy. Techno wraps a hand around the grip of his gun and starts his patrol. He is not a healer, and if anyone tries to get to his crew when they're vulnerable, they will see just how bad of a healer he is.

Tubbo & Ranboo

Chapter Summary

sometimes all you have is each other

i feel like i cant write a ranboo chapter w/o adding in some recovery in there. oh well

cw:

- religious trauma themes
- vommiting
- general dread and sickness

It has been nearly twelve hours since they had laid Tommy down in his bed, and Tubbo has not removed himself from where he lays against the human's back. He keeps his hand in the center of Tommy's chest, each breath that moves his hand up bringing him another wave of relief. He can't force himself to get up, not that he would be able to do much if he did. He's a scientist, sure, but he deals with *plants*, not people, and certainly not in deathly ill creatures that have so little public information that they may as well be cryptids.

It's all he can do to lay here and feel the warmth of his friend's back against his stomach, and the shaky breath that reassures him that Tommy is not yet gone. He's much warmer than normal, which Tommy tells him is bad, something called a fever that can kill him if it gets too high, but the waves of heat rolling off of his friend's skin are endlessly preferred to the cold clamminess that coats dead mammals' skin. Tubbo holds him a little tighter. Tommy hums questioningly, barely awake.

"Nothing," Tubbo mutters, hoping Tommy can't hear how his voice wavers. "Go back to sleep."

Tubbo doesn't know if Tommy really does manage to drop back off into the fickle sleep he had been in for the past day, his breath doesn't change. Nothing changes. The room is still dark to chase away Tommy's headache, Ranboo still sits in the corner and stares out the window at the endless darkness that surrounds them. Tubbo would ask if he's okay, his brain always gets a little fried when he stares into space for too long, but he can't bring himself to worry about anything else. He already feels like his insides have been hollowed out. If it weren't for how fast his heart is racing, he'd say he's numb.

The only time he moves is to replace the wet cloth that lays on Tommy's forehead when the heat of his fever warms it. Phil occasionally will come into the room to switch out the bowl of water for a fresh one. In the beginning, Tubbo had been changing the cloth every half an hour, after six hours he had to change it every fifteen minutes, and now every ten. The fever's getting worse. Phil opens the door, flooding the room with light before he closes it behind him. Tubbo doesn't turn to look, he doesn't want to move. In his peripheries, he can see that Ranboo has not taken his gaze away from the window, lost in his mind. Tubbo wishes he could join the enderian in an escape from the situation.

Phil takes away the bowl of lukewarm water that sits on Tommy's bedside table and replaces it with a fresh one. Tubbo can see chunks of ice floating in it this time. He buries his face further in Tommy's back, not wanting to look at the proof that things are getting worse. It's only been a day, and Tommy's already gotten this bad, how long do they have to find a cure?

Tommy takes in a shuddering breath, curling into an even smaller ball. Tubbo holds onto him a little tighter.

Not long enough.

The Void was never kind. Maybe it was softer to the priests and disciples that walked their planet, but it was not kind to Ranboo. He was happy, for a month at most before everything came crashing down around him. He had finally gotten away from the ICA, and according to Phil they had agreed to fulfill their end of the scholarship and had been funneling him a hefty sum of money since he'd started staying on the SBI's vessel. He had enough saved up now that he could go find a reliable place to live now, not that he ever would. He would rather stay on the SBI than live in some sprawling settlement. He was financially independent, he had friends, he was *free*. He was happy.

And now, Tommy is dying.

Ranboo can't help but feel like it's his fault. He isn't supposed to be happy, he rejected the Void, and then he escaped his planet's exile. The Void sent him to the ICA, where he was always going to be miserable, and he got out. He made friends. He was on the fast track to

getting a real family. Getting a haunting again, something he had been dreaming about since he was Marked.

Of course, the Void would never allow him to be happy. Ranboo has been too resilient to its attempts to harm him, and it has resorted to attacking his family. If Ranboo had never come here, if Ranboo had just sucked it up and let the Elder's put him in the Well then his crew would be safe. He would have lost his mind in the most literal of ways, sure, but the rest of them would be safe and happy.

Ranboo leans his head forward and presses his forehead against the cool glass of the window. He stares out at the infinite black that surrounds him. The stars dotting the velvet dispel any similarities to the Void, but it doesn't stop a shudder from going down his spine, seeing something so vast and empty.

He rarely speaks his own tongue anymore. It's too painful, the ache of grief that pangs in his chest at the sound of the clicks and chatters that he was born into, the language his mother sang to him in, the one that was spoken when he was sent away. He barely knew any Common when he had left, and his fractured memory made it all the more difficult to communicate. He doesn't know how to translate the prayers of his own tongue into Common, they don't sound right. The Void is not kind to people like him, and he's sure this is his punishment, but he can still pray. He can fall back on that old comfort, the familiar words, even if the Void does not listen, hearing the words he's repeated endless times will bring him some form of solace.

"Endless blackened skies, I pray that you cast your power unto me," Ranboo says, chirruping softly, closing his eyes. "With my endless devotion and loyalty to you," Ranboo winces internally at the obvious lie. "I ask that you... that you focus your punishment unto me. I know I have done wrong by you, I know. I don't know- I thought- I thought maybe that I had suffered enough. If I haven't then- then do what you must, but please. *Please*. Tommy didn't do *anything*. Kill me, take me instead. It's me you want to hurt, leave them alone."

Ranboo falls silent, the darkness of the Void buzzing in the back of his mind.

"I'm sorry," He says for what feels like the millionth time. "I'm sorry. Please- *please*."

Ranboo feels his eyes start to burn with tears and tilts his head back with a gasping breath. He doesn't want to cry and add to the myriad of scarred-over tear tracks that run down his

face. The deep breaths he's taking don't seem to help him at all, his breathing shaking all over the place. Tubbo sits up from where he's been laying next to Tommy, blinking at the enderian blearily.

"You okay Boo?" He asks, rubbing his eyes. Ranboo shakes his head and snuffles miserably. Tubbo softens further and pats the empty spot next to him.

"Come 'ere," He mutters. Ranboo doesn't need any further convincing, scrambling from the window and into the relative safety of the bed. Tubbo offers the sleeve of his coat for Ranboo to bury his face in, to soak up the tears before they sear the thin skin of his face. Ranboo accepts, hiding his eyes and letting himself cry, ignoring the slight burn from the water that managed to touch his skin.

"What were you saying over there?" Tubbo asks, voice quiet, still tired. "In your own language?" Ranboo is quiet for a few moments, not wanting to tell Tubbo the deepest parts of his prayer.

"You don't have to say if it makes you uncomfortable," Tubbo murmurs.

"I was... praying," Ranboo says, voice muffled from where his face buried in fabric.

"I didn't think you still prayed," Tubbo says, no judgment in his tone, only quiet surprise. Ranboo hums, considering, rolling onto his back. Tommy sleeps on, unaware of the conversation happening next to him.

"I do, sometimes," Ranboo admits. "I know I shouldn't-"

"Why shouldn't you?" Tubbo asks, frowning.

"...I don't know," Ranboo says, sighing deeply. "I- I denied the Seeing, I rejected the Void. I don't think I should be praying, and besides- I shouldn't even *want* to, with everything-"

"*Do* you want to?" Tubbo asks.

"...Yes. It's still... it makes me feel safe."

"Then do it," Tubbo says, turning back towards the ceiling. "Forget about what you *should* do. Your situation is... *unique*, worry about what you *want*."

"I don't think I *know* what I want," Ranboo admits. "I'm not used to wanting anything."

Tubbo takes his hand, a human gesture that Tommy had taught them and something the rest of the crew quickly picked up as a show of affection.

"You'll learn," Tubbo promises. "Let's start with something simple, what's your favorite food?"

"Um... chorus fruits. I haven't had them since I left my home, though. Hard to get off-planet, you know."

"There," Tubbo says simply. "You want chorus fruits. Next time we head to some specialty food outsourcer, we'll get some." Ranboo jolts, wincing.

"Oh, Tubbo, no. They're so expensive."

"We have money, Ranboo." Tubbo reminds him flatly.

"But- but it's stupid. It's just fruit-"

"'anboo," Tommy croaks, making them both jump.

"Tommy! You're awake!" Ranboo says, sitting up. "How are you feeling?"

"Phil buys me canned fruit from Earth," Tommy says, ignoring the question. "Let them do nice things for you, you deserve nice things."

Ranboo shuts his mouth, trying not to cry. He can't speak over the sudden lump in his throat. He's still not used to being able to want things, he's still not used to not being treated like a burden. Tubbo tries to wrestle Tommy back to lying down while Tommy whines weakly about being babied. He's clearly feeling a little better if he can complain, but Ranboo knows it won't last. The human's pain comes in waves, and if he's feeling good now he's soon to crash again.

Ranboo's good mood drops when Tommy shoves Tubbo away with a bit more force than usual and lunges for the bucket that sits next to his bed. He coughs into it before throwing up again. Ranboo averts his eyes, half out of politeness, and partially because it's *really* gross. Tubbo holds his hair back in the way Tommy told him to do, rubbing his back with one hand.

Tommy sets the bucket back down and collapses onto his pillow, almost immediately falling back into sleep. Ranboo sighs deeply, burying his face in his hands. When he lifts his head, he sees the haunted look in Tubbo's eyes and freezes.

"Are you... okay?" Ranboo asks, wincing at the realization that he hasn't asked Tubbo that yet. This must be hellish for the apisaide, lying next to his best friend with no way to know if he would be okay or not.

Tubbo doesn't answer, doesn't turn to face Ranboo. His hands tremble as they pull the blankets up around Tommy. Ranboo puts a hand on Tubbo's shoulders, and the apisaide

breaks, curling in on himself and shuddering. Ranboo doesn't know what to say to fix this. There is no fixing this, no helping.

Ranboo pulls Tubbo into his lap as he shakes, wrapping his long arms around him, shielding him from the terror that surrounds them. His tail comes up, the fluffy tip brushing against Tubbo's face, causing him to let out a wet giggle.

Ranboo held him like that for a while, until the apisaid's breathing evens out and his tired eyes slipped closed. Ranboo smiles down at him before removing his tail and settling it on Tommy's chest. He lays back against the headboard, staring at the ceiling. He'll take watch for now, let Tubbo sleep. He needs it.

"Void..." Ranboo clicks. He rarely speaks the name these days, a vague prayer is one thing, but actually *invoking* the Void is different. "I- I've been hurt by you. A lot. I'm trying to learn to live with... everything. I know... it wasn't really *you* that did all those horrible things to me, it was... your worshippers. It's still hard not to associate you with all the wrong that's been done to me, but- but I want to... I want to be able to feel comfort when I pray again. I want to pray for me. Not because I'm scared of what will happen if I don't."

Ranboo takes a deep breath. He doesn't think he's ever prayed *for* anything before. Only sent his devotion and fearful respect to the Void. Or, more recently, begged to be killed in his haunting's stead.

"Save Tommy, please. Protect him in the way you never could protect me."

Ranboo stares out the window at the velvety darkness that cradles the ship. It looks a little kinder than yesterday.

Wilbur

Chapter Summary

here we are, the long awaited wilbur chapter! what is our resident scientist doing locked up in a lab all by himself?

CW

-death ment

-medical trauma ment

-surgery ment

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur has done many important things in his life. He has synthesized drugs and supplements that have helped people from all walks of life. He is the head scientist of an extremely prolific ship. He is among the first to make healthy contact with a human being. He's incredibly proud of all that he's accomplished.

He would give it all away if he could just figure out this *one* thing.

He's been pouring over thick texts full of inaccurate information for fourteen hours now, not having stopped to eat or sleep since Tommy had collapsed against the bathroom wall, gasping for breath and sobbing. Wilbur tears his dry eyes away from the next in the number of countless articles about human weaknesses. The information he's found on human illness has been sparse at best, and often has very little about actually *healing* them. More focused on how terrifying human illnesses are.

Wilbur doesn't *care* about that. He *knows* human illness is terrifying, he could figure that out by walking into Tommy's room and taking in the human's pale, shaking figure. He scans over the table of contents again, searching for the next section. The next illness and list of symptoms.

"Common cold, frostbite, leprosy- *dammit* !" Wilbur says, throwing the book down harshly. He buries his face in his hands, taking a deep, shuddering breath.

"Fuck," He mutters, voice trembling. "Fuck!" He cries, throwing his head back. His little brother lays dying in the other room, he's deteriorated so much in so little time, he doesn't know how much longer the human has for Wilbur to search for a cure. He would have had more time if Wilbur had actually *noticed* that something was wrong when he found Tommy asleep on the bathroom floor. If Wilbur was actually competent enough to recognize sickness in humans they would at least have a little bit more time.

Wilbur stands, sweeping his arm across the desk and sending all the worthless research he's been studying to the floor.

"It's all *bullshit* ," Wilbur growls. "None of them know *anything* !"

Tommy is going to die and it's Wilbur's fault. He's the scientist, he's the closest thing to a doctor this ship has, and still, Tommy lays in his bed, near death. If Tommy dies, Wilbur will never be able to forgive himself. The ship will never be the same if they lose their bright, sunspot of a human. They wouldn't be able to go back to the dynamic they had before Tommy had arrived, taking up refuge in their vents and just as easily weaseling his way into their family. There would always be the cold spot of something missing following them at every turn, the knowledge that there should be someone laughing at a stupid joke or flipping the game board when he loses.

They don't even know how human funeral rites work, Wilbur realizes with a shaky breath. They had never asked, they always assumed they'd have more time, and now Tommy is far too sick to go into detail about his own funeral. Wilbur wouldn't want to talk to him about it anyway, he doesn't want Tommy to be afraid.

Wilbur shakes his head. There's still time, even as it dwindles with every grating tick of the clock, he still has a chance to save Tommy. He just needs to keep looking.

Wilbur lifts his head and stares at the scattered books and papers around him, all full of information gained from people like those poachers who had taken Tommy from his home. Most of it is wrong, the footnote describing that humans drank blood was something that Wilbur and Tommy had laughed over back when Tommy's face was still rosy and full of life. Wilbur doesn't think it's funny anymore.

He takes a deep breath, attempts to center himself, and picks up the book again. It's a thick tome about human health, not a very popular one with researchers, but Wilbur had picked it

up as soon as he'd seen it in some shady marketplace, getting quite the dirty look from the shopkeeper. He and Tommy had sat over it for hours, Wilbur reading things out loud and Tommy laughing at the blatantly incorrect parts and correcting some of them. There are little scratches of black ink where Wilbur had written Tommy's corrections.

They had only gotten halfway through. Wilbur feels a swooping pang of dread at the idea that they may never finish it at all. Wilbur takes another breath and opens his book again, thumb brushing a drawing of Wilbur that Tommy had scratched into the margins. A fresh wave of grief nearly boles him over, a tightness in his chest making him choke on his breath.

Wilbur hunches over the book, thankful that his eyes don't produce tears like Tommy's do. He doesn't want to smudge the ink of the human's drawing. He clenches his teeth, the ache that fills him and makes him want to scream grows stronger and stronger. He can hear his blood moving in his ears, moving in his veins. He's losing hope. He's combed through every book he has on humans, and there's *nothing* pertaining to whatever is killing Tommy. Wilbur lays his head on the desk, the only sounds in the room the rushing of his blood and the infuriating ticking of the clock.

Wilbur snarls at the sound, grabbing one of the fallen books and whipping it at the clock, furious at the way time slips away from him, every second that ticks by bringing Tommy closer and closer to death. The face of the clock shatters, and the hands follow the book to the floor, chased by a rain of shattered glass.

Wilbur blinks, chafed by his own destructiveness. He stands, legs aching from how long he had been sitting. He stretches his bowed legs with a slight wince, shaking them out to get the blood flow back into them. He walks to the book, head low in shame of his childishness, and reaches for it.

The book had fallen open, the spine cracked. Wilbur brushes the shards of glass off of the pages and goes to lift it before freezing. His eyes flick over the list of symptoms, ears rising in surprise and tentative hope.

"Begining as stomach discomfort... blacking out, nausea, vomiting, fever." Wilbur reads in a whisper. Wilbur turns his face up to the ceiling and shuts his eyes, relief sweeping over him. "Thank you."

Wilbur snatches the book, careful not to lose the page. He takes it back to his desk, throwing the book onto the metal surface. He crouches over it, flipping through the pages frantically to see what the text says about treatment.

"...*the spontaneous bursting of the appendix... can be- can be fatal if left untreated* ." Wilbur swallows nervously. "Okay, okay, *how* do you treat it then?" He mutters to himself. He freezes, the point of his claw hovering over the words he had been so desperately trying to find since Tommy had fallen ill.

"Treatment and cure," Wilbur mutters to himself, sending up a silent thank you to whoever it is in his corner. "Okay. Right. *To save the subjects life, one must perform -*"

Wilbur falls silent, dread rising in him.

"No. No, no." He whispers, reading over the line again. The words '*emergency surgery*' stand out against the white paper like blood in the snow. Wilbur collapses backward in his chair.

He is not a surgeon, and especially not to a human, who the only anatomy he understands is the childish diagrams in illegal books. Wilbur lashes his tail. Tommy could very well die under the knife, and it would be Wilbur that killed him. If Wilbur doesn't do it, Tommy will die anyway, and it will still be Wilbur's fault.

Tommy is going to hate him. Wilbur is not blind to what happened on Dream's ship, he's seen the shiny pink scars that litter Tommy's skin. The ones that are too neat to be from a fight. He knows, even if Tommy hasn't told him. Wilbur is going to have to become the thing Tommy fears the most in order to save his life.

It is a tremendous burden, but the decision is obvious. He will accept Tommy being afraid of him, Tommy *hating* him for the rest of their lives if it means that Tommy will live, will keep getting into stupid teenage shenanigans with Ranboo and Tubbo, will keep pestering Phil into buying him Earth junk just for a taste of home, will keep getting Techno to teach him how to use a sword, even though he'd nearly gotten his head knocked off the first time.

He wants Tommy to have a good life, even if Wilbur isn't a part of it. Hell, Wilbur will leave the ship if that's what Tommy wants, even though he would miss them all terribly. Leaving would be better than seeing Tommy's blue eyes, wide and fearful of him like he had been when he'd first arrived. Leaving would be lengths better than reminding Tommy of all the horror he'd gone through every time he sits with him at breakfast or shows him a new experiment he had cooked up.

He'll do it. It's risky, but he will not let his brother die shaking and sick, buried under his blankets. Wilbur grabs a book on human anatomy and walks out the door. He has a med bay to prepare.

Chapter End Notes

everyone say thank you kirstin!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

also, a good few people correctly guessed appendicitis, so you get a gold star!

Tomophobia

Chapter Summary

a little shorter than i anticipated

also a heads up, the actual surgery scene will not include heavy gore. you will not find that in any of my works, as it's not something I'm comfortable writing.

enjoy

cw:

-restraint

-medical trauma

Wilbur is not unused to delivering bad news. It's something that comes with the territory when working in any sort of medical field, but it's never been like this.

Tommy has a piece of paper taped to his door with his name written in English in big bubble letters. It's colored red and surrounded by drawings of different Earth animals. Wilbur shifts his grip on the book that's held under one arm. A collection of articles and diagrams has never felt so heavy.

Wilbur swallows and opens the door.

The room smells terrible, the stench of infection permeating the air. Ranboo and Tubbo lay curled around Tommy, neither of them looking up upon Wilbur's entry.

"I know what it is," Wilbur says, voice hushed. Both of the teenagers shoot up from where they had laid, scrambling over each other in their attempt to get to him. They speak over each other, full of frantic questions and whispered prayers.

Wilbur holds a hand up.

"Hold on," He says, stepping towards Tommy. "I need to make sure." He reaches a hand out and presses on the human's abdomen, right next to his navel. For a moment, nothing happens, and Wilbur is equal parts relieved and horrified. He may not need to perform surgery after all, but if this is not appendicitis then he has no idea what it could be. Then, he pulls his hand

away, and Tommy screams louder than Wilbur has ever heard. Tubbo is immediately shouting as well, pulling Wilbur's arm away from Tommy with enough force to jar Wilbur's shoulder.

"What the fuck are you *doing* ?" Tubbo shrieks, neck ruff flaring and stingers extending slightly in his anger.

"I need to perform surgery," Wilbur breathes. Tubbo drops his arm, horror lining every inch of him.

"What?" The apisaid says, voice equally hushed.

"What?" Tommy repeats, much louder. Wilbur whips around. He had thought Tommy was still asleep.

"Your appendix has burst," Wilbur explains, not moving closer. He doesn't want to scare him, not yet. Not while there's still time. "I need to take it out, or-"

"No, no- *please* -" Tommy starts, backing up so quickly that he nearly falls off of the bed. Ranboo catches him, not letting go when Tommy starts to struggle. Wilbur breathes out a breath of relief. As terrible as it is to see the terror on Tommy's face, the last thing they need right now is Tommy hurting himself further in his attempts to escape.

Tommy is crying, Wilbur realizes, taking an instinctive step forward, hands reaching out to wipe his tears. Tommy flinches back, nearly knocking Ranboo off of his feet. He tries to scramble out of the enderian's arms, but Ranboo holds him tighter, and Tommy, too weak from sickness to escape, collapses against him, his frantic breaths sounding more and more like the whining of an injured animal as the seconds pass.

Wilbur swallows down bile and turns to Tubbo. A good doctor can separate themselves from their emotion. Wilbur is not a doctor, but he has no choice but to become one to save Tommy's life.

"Go get a gurney. One with straps." He says, doing his best to keep his voice even. Tubbo balks, looking unsteady.

"But-"

"Tubbo. *Go* . He'll die without it." Wilbur presses, a firmness in his voice leaving little room for argument. Tubbo takes one last desperate look at his friend and darts off. Wilbur turns back to Tommy. Even if he will not listen, Wilbur will do his best to explain.

"Tommy, I'm just going to take the appendix out," Wilbur explains. "I bought anesthetics from someone reputable, you won't feel anything. If I don't- Tommy you're going to die if I don't. I'm sorry. If there was any other way you know I'd do it."

Tommy doesn't say anything, just stares at him with wide, betrayed eyes. Wilbur wants to scream. There is no good way for this to end, but it will end. Either with Tommy dead or hating him. The choice is obvious.

Techno enters, he has a gurney. One of the fancy folding ones that Phil made enough money to buy. He has it tucked under one arm, and Wilbur can see the straps poking out from beneath the Piglin's cape. Wilbur's stomach lurches dangerously, but there is no other way.

"Tommy, I'm sorry," Wilbur says. Tommy only struggles harder. "I'm sorry," Wilbur shouts, voice choked. He turns to Techno, who takes a step back, likely put off by the no doubt wild look in the phantling's eyes. "Run to the med bay, I'll meet you there. Sterilize everything."

Techno doesn't hesitate to follow his instructions, which Wilbur would preen at in any other situation.

"Ranboo, get us to the medbay. Now." He snaps, grabbing onto the edge of the enderian's cloak. Ranboo chirps nervously, but shuts his eyes and teleports the three of them to a room already smelling of antiseptic. Techno hasn't yet arrived but must have sent a message to Phil, because their captain is there scrubbing down every surface, every feather bristling in his stress.

It doesn't take more than thirty seconds for Techno to arrive back in, slamming the gurney on the floor. Wilbur hears Tommy whimper behind and nearly collapses to the ground. There is no other way. Wilbur gestures for Ranboo to set Tommy down on the gurney, and he does. Tommy thrashes, but can't move much once Techno has secured the restraints in place. Tears run down the human's face, and Wilbur steps forward. Tommy is pleading now, babbling in English, of which Wilbur only recognizes a few words. It's been a long time since he's needed to speak it. He can hear Tommy begging him to stop, though. There's no way he could have missed that.

Tubbo and Ranboo stand in the doorway, wide-eyed.

"Get the kids out of here," Wilbur mutters to Technoblade, who nods and steps towards them. He corrals them out to fierce protest, and locks the door behind them. He returns to Wilbur's side, face blank as it usually is, but for as long as Wilbur has known him he'd have to be blind not to see the pain in his eyes. Wilbur's eyes dart to a medical kit at his side. It's open, revealing glinting blades and needles. On his right is a tank of gas that's meant to knock

humans out into their deepest stage of sleep, keep them from feeling any pain. It's been used across the galaxy for... less than moral purposes, and it disgusts Wilbur to be using the same substance that Tommy's captors likely used, but he'd rather not cause Tommy any undue pain.

He turns back to Tommy, who is looking at him now, eyes still bright with fever, but clearer than they've been since he'd collapsed. He looks betrayed. Wilbur can't blame him. Wilbur can't...

He can't do this.

He reaches down and unhooks the restraints on Tommy's wrists. The human sits up, still staring at Wilbur suspiciously, rubbing his wrists where the straps had bit into them. Phil and Techno have gone silent too, stopped moving.

"Tommy, I'm- I'm not going to do this without your permission," Wilbur says. It's going against every instinct in his body, but he feels like he's taking a hundred steps back in Tommy's progress by doing this. "You're going to die if I don't, though, you need to know that. It is your choice."

Tommy is staring at him. He reaches out and takes one of Wilbur's trembling hands.

"You're sure it's appendicitis?" Tommy whispers.

"It's the best bet," Wilbur responds grimly.

"You know, I've had nightmares about this," Tommy admits. Wilbur winces. "But... I do trust you. I need you to promise me something, though, if you're really going to do this."

"Anything," Wilbur swears. He means it too.

"If I die don't all start hating each other, okay?" Tommy mutters. "Oh, and get Ranboo some chorus fruit if you can manage it."

Wilbur swallows.

"Will do, big man." He says, voice trembling. "Will do."

C3H2CIF5O

Chapter Summary

dont read this one if blood makes you squeamish.

stop at 'His hands are no longer shaking' begin at 'Wilbur collapses to the ground.' to avoid the bloody bits

cw

-inaccurate medicine

-blood/organs

-dissasociation

Tommy is asleep, by no choice of his own. Wilbur had not missed the way his hands trembled as he gripped the mask that fed the anesthesia into his lungs. He didn't have long to feel much fear, thankfully, as it barely took ten seconds for Tommy's hands to go slack and let the mask clatter to the floor. Wilbur shudders. If that gas is strong enough to render a human completely unconscious in a matter of seconds, he doesn't want to know what it would do to any of them.

There is no time to dwell on it. Time is of the essence now. Wilbur is wearing gloves specially made for his species, to keep germs off of him and out of Tommy. They do nothing to hide his trembling, but he can't shake. Not now.

Wilbur takes a long breath and tries to disconnect from the situation. He can hear Phil muttering in the corner, praying. He focuses on that. He is not a person right now, right now, all that matters, his entire purpose is making sure that Tommy lives to see tomorrow.

He's set Tommy up with a series of IVs, which he knows the human is going to hate when he wakes up, antibiotics being the main ones. He's going to need it. There is another, smaller bag of saline solution guided into his arm, keeping him hydrated. Goodness knows he needs it with how much he's been throwing up over the past fifteen hours.

The book on human anatomy is open to a diagram on Wilbur's left. Techno stands to his right, ready to hand him tools or flip the page. Wilbur has circled what he needs to remove in red

pen. It's not the most detailed diagram, but it's going to have to do for now. Wilbur picks up the scalpel. His hands are no longer shaking.

Wilbur pushes Tommy's shirt up, showing his stomach. Wilbur glances to the book, and then back at Tommy. He moves his hand, barely a twitch, like the stroke of a pen.

Then there is blood on his hands. Wilbur can't think of it as Tommy's blood. He can't. His hands will start shaking and his breath will start to come in pants and he'll mess up somehow and he *can't* mess this up. So. There is *human* blood on his hands. Ruby red and glinting in the fluorescent lights of the med bay. Techno makes some sort of noise beside him, a shaky exhale. Phil is still praying.

Deeper cuts, past muscle, past fat. Carefully, more carefully than he's ever done anything in his life, he reaches what he's looking for. It matches the drawing in the book, though the blood makes it hard to see, painting everything red. Wilbur breathes in and then out. He cannot fail.

"-and I know- I *know* you can save him, please, please darling not like this." Phil is saying. Wilbur focuses on his voice and not on how slippery the blood makes the knife feel, on how he can feel Tomm- the *human's* slow heartbeat against his hand. "I know you would *love* him like I love him, he's like my own kid. That- that kind of makes him your kid too, I know he's gonna love you when he meets you, I know you can save him." Their captain takes in a deep breath, and Wilbur feels a strange warmth sweep through him, buzzing with power.

"Please don't let my boy die," Phil whispers.

It takes two hours.

Phil's voice is raw and cracking every other word, but he is still speaking, prayers spilling from his tongue, Techno is stoic as ever, but Wilbur can see the way his tail swishes nervously. The table is covered in blood, *Wilbur* is covered in blood, but he's so close to being done. He's stitching him now, not a method used by phantlings but one Tommy had

taught him how to do months ago. Wilbur had thought it was barbaric at the time, but he's glad he's learned.

He cuts the thread and ties it off.

It's over.

Tommy is alive.

Wilbur collapses to the ground, nearly impaling himself on his scalpel. Techno yelps in a way that Wilbur is definitely going to make fun of him for later and grabs him under the arms. Wilbur doesn't even try to struggle, more exhausted than he's ever been in his life. Techno makes a concerned chuffing noise and shakes him a little bit, chuffing again when Wilbur stays limp in his grip.

He hears Phil's talons clicking on the floor, and then there is a hand on his shoulder.

"You okay?" Phil asks, quietly.

"Yeah," Wilbur breathes, letting Techno lower him onto a nearby couch. "I'm okay."

They sit there in silence for several seconds, taking in the fact that, while they're not out of the woods yet, the worst is over. Wilbur thinks of the two members of the crew not clued into this, likely still sitting outside the door of the med bay.

"Go get the kids," Wilbur croaks, throwing an arm over his eyes to block out the light. He's already getting a fierce headache, but that's hardly a surprise considering how every muscle in his body has been lined with tension for the past two hours. Techno nods and starts towards the door.

They must have heard him coming, because the moment Techno opens the door the two teenagers are scrambling over each other to get in.

"Is he okay?" They both say at the same time, Tubbo much, much more loudly than Ranboo.

"He's gonna be alright," Techno says, giving the two a rare smile. Ranboo collapses to the ground in relief, but is given no time to rest, instead dragged along the floor by the collar to stand at Tommy's bedside by Tubbo.

Tubbo frowns at the human's condition, using the sleeve of his coat to wipe a bit of blood from his face. Ranboo drags a couple of chairs to sit by Tommy's bed, giving them both a place to sit. Phil clucks disapprovingly from his position near Wilbur's couch and gets to his feet.

"Those don't look comfortable at all," The elytrian gripes, sweeping towards the door. "We've all been through a lot, I'll go get blankets."

Their captain rushes out of the room, feathers already bristling, and Techno lets out a long-suffering sigh.

"Great." He says dryly. "He's *nesting* ."

"Can you blame him," Wilbur mutters, not taking his arm off of his face.

"Not really," Techno admits with a sigh, sitting down on the floor beside Wilbur. The phantling takes his arm off of his face, squinting in the bright light. He sees Tubbo and Ranboo watch over Tommy with something like reverence, and something in him settles. He says an internal thank you to whatever's out there.

"You should probably go wash before Tommy wakes up," Techno says after a few seconds of silence.

"Why?" Wilbur asks, frowning. It seems a little low on the list of priorities.

"You're covered in his blood right now, not a great sight to wake up to." Techno points out. Wilbur winces, hissing through his teeth, and rolls off of the couch.

"Fine," He says, heading for the door, not without sending one last look at Tommy, surrounded by his friends. "Call me if anything-"

"I will," Techno says, waving him off. "Worry wort."

Wilbur gives him a mock glare before heading out of the room. He can hear Phil bustling around somewhere in the ship, no doubt stealing all of their bedding to pile in the med bay, so he gives the captain a wide berth. The last thing he needs right now is to be fussed over by a brooding elytrian.

Actually, now that he thinks about it that might not be *too* bad, but he doesn't have time for that right now. He has to clean all the blood off of him before it gets too dry to scrape off without a fair amount of pain.

He reaches the showers and turns the water on. It doesn't take long for it to heat up since he's not going to use Tommy's preferred temperature of *about the surface of the fucking sun*. He strips off his sweater and throws it in the laundry bin. The blood's not gonna come out. He'd burn it if he wasn't on a spaceship where fire is a 'needless safety hazard' and 'not a toy'. He'll definitely throw it away, though. It's not a huge loss, there are other yellow sweaters out there.

Wilbur steps under the warm water and is immediately overcome with exhaustion. Being on his feet for hours is enough of a pain, it's not what his species was built for, but paired with the fact that he was operating on his youngest family member with no real knowledge or experience with his species... he is a different kind of tired. He nearly falls asleep in the shower multiple times, but he still isn't able to fall asleep standing up. Not for lack of trying. Ranboo is one lucky bastard.

Wilbur manages to keep his eyes open, though, rubbing phantling-safe soap on the parts of him that are particularly stained with blood. It mostly covers his forearms, but he's sure some got on his face and in his hair so he is sure to scrub those too.

It takes a while, and his skin is nearly raw by the time he's finished, but eventually, he is clean of blood. He steps out of the water and turns it off, walking in front of the mirror to make sure every speck of red or brown is clear from him. Once he's satisfied that he has no blood on him, he pulls a poncho from his closet, still yellow, but patched with leathery brown fabric that makes up an array of pockets. Wilbur shrugs it on and rolls the bloodstained yellow sweater into a ball and shoves it in the back of his closet.

When he gets back to the medbay, he is unsurprised to see that the lights have been dimmed considerably and there is a ludicrously sized pile of blankets around Tommy's bed. Phil has corralled everyone into the nest and has his wings stretched over them. Wilbur lets out a quiet,

pleased trill to see his family all in one place. Phil perks up at the sight of him, gesturing him over and lifting a wing so that Wilbur can climb underneath.

Wilbur does not hesitate, eager to be shielded by the stresses of the world. He nestles under one of Phil's wings, beside Ranboo, who is already sleeping, likely exhausted from how stressed he's been. Tubbo is much the same, one hand grasping Tommy's even as they both sleep.

"We should sleep in shifts," Wilbur whispers "Someone needs to stay up to watch him."

"Techno and I will," Phil says back, just as quiet. Techno makes an irritated noise from Phil's other side but doesn't protest any further. "You've done enough today. Just sleep."

Wilbur needs no more convincing, wrapped in the warmth of his captain's wings and surrounded by his family, all safe and- somehow, miraculously alive.

They aren't out of the woods yet, it's going to take time and patience that Wilbur isn't sure he possesses, but Tommy will get better. They've got him hooked up to enough painkillers to stop all their hearts combined, he won't feel anything when he wakes up, though he may be a little loopy.

Wilbur falls asleep to the smell of antiseptic and the strange, phantom sensation of a giant fingertip trailing down his back.

Side Effects

Chapter Summary

hello again. i broke my streak because i was so so exhausted yesterday. I'm still exhausted, but it's the next morning so here we are

cw:

-none this time

Phil was on shift when Tommy awoke, and for that he is grateful. For all that Phil loves Techno, he has the emotional range of one of Tubbo's plants.

Phil is glancing up from where he watches his flock when he sees that Tommy's eyes are open, hazy and blue. Phil freezes, surprised to see him awake so soon after surgery, though he guesses he shouldn't really be so shocked what with the human's strangely efficient healing rate.

"Hey mate," Phil says gently, shifting his wings slightly. "How are you feelin'?" Tommy swallows dryly, looking bewildered.

"What-" He asks, voice dry and cracking. He swallows before speaking again. "What's going on?"

"You're in the medbay," Phil explains quietly, careful not to wake the others. Surely the extra noise and chaos wouldn't be good for Tommy's current mental state. "You just had surgery."

"Oh," Tommy says, sounding so childlike it makes Phil's hearts clench painfully. "What did they take?"

"Just the appendix," Phil soothes. "It was hurting you."

Tommy's hands come up to brush against the stitches and Phil lurches forward to hold his hands away.

"No, don't touch that Tommy," Phil pleads. "You're going to hurt yourself."

"Did you do stitches?" Tommy asks hazily. "I didn't think you knew how to sew."

"No, Wilbur did them," Phil explains, still not letting go of the human's hands.

"Hm," Tommy hums thoughtfully, slowly sinking back into a supine position and drifting off again. Phil chirps in relief and retreats back to the nest, though he doesn't stop watching Tommy.

Phil watches him in silence for another hour, not bothering to wake Techno for the shift. He's too nervous to sleep now anyway, and he wants to be there when Tommy wakes up.

When he does wake, he sits up so fast that Phil worries for his stitches. The elytrian is immediately at his bedside, hands hovering, unsure what to do. He's a lot less calm than last time, eyes wide and panicked as he struggles.

"Tommy, calm down," Phil says evenly. "You're on the SBI's ship, you're safe, okay?"

Tommy doesn't react, he may as well not have heard him. Had he not been weakened by the powerful pain killers in his system, there's no way Phil would have been able to hold him down enough that he wouldn't rip out his IVs.

"No, get off!" Tommy growls. Phil takes a few steps back immediately. Even if Tommy isn't strong enough to hurt him right now, not respecting his space would likely only make his mental state worse. "Don't touch me!"

"Okay, I won't touch you," Phil says in English, hoping the familiar language will put the frantic human at ease. "I'm over here, see."

Tommy pauses, glaring at Phil in confusion. He lists to the side slightly, and Phil has to fight the urge to steady him in case he falls over.

"English... are you human?" Tommy asks, voice slurring slightly. Phil tries not to make a habit of lying, but if it will help Tommy calm down then he has no issue with it now.

"Yeah," Phil lies. "I'm a human like you."

"Will you help me?" Tommy asks, relaxing slightly now that he thinks Phil is a human.

"With what?" Phil asks, careful to keep his voice calm and steady.

"I think they drugged me," Tommy says, and Phil is horrified to see panicked tears welling up in the human's eyes. "I don't feel good."

"Okay, that's alright," Phil reassures quickly. "You had to have surgery, remember? You'll feel better in a little bit."

"I don't feel good," Tommy repeats, lying back down and settling a hand over his stomach. He's shaking slightly. Phil will have to ask Wilbur if that's normal once Tommy falls back asleep.

"I know," Phil wracks his brain trying to remember a human term of endearment. He remembers Tommy mentioning them a few times, but the exact phrase is hard to recall. "Honey?"

"You say that word weird," Tommy hums, eyes slipping shut again. "Where are you from?"

"Earth," Phil lies, sitting down on the edge of Tommy's bed now that he's calmed down some.

"Yeah, but *where* on Earth?" Tommy asks around a yawn. Phil blanches, Earth geography not being something he's studied in any significant detail.

"Uh... well, where are you from?" Phil asks, eager to change the subject.

"England," Tommy mutters, already falling back asleep.

"What a coincidence, that's where I'm from too."

"Cool..." Tommy slurs. Phil relaxes, the danger of Tommy realizing he's not human and potentially freaking out has passed.

"Go back to sleep, mate," Phil says softly, watching Tommy's chest rise and fall. A reassurance after the terrifying day they've had. "You'll feel better when you wake up."

Tommy doesn't respond beyond a hum, already drifting off.

Somehow, Phil manages to fall asleep too. It's not a huge surprise, with how stressed he's been and how long he's been awake, but when he next opens his eyes Tommy is sitting up in bed and looking afraid. Lost. His fledgling should never look that way. Phil is on his feet in a second, heedless of how he jostles his crew into wakefulness.

"Tommy, what's wrong?" Phil croons, feathers fluffing up in agitation. Tommy's head whips to Phil, eyes confused and unfocused.

"Sam?" He whimpers, struggling to reach him and nearly tearing out his IVs. Phil rushes to steady him, surprised when Tommy leans into his touch instead of pulling away. Phil doesn't know who Sam is, but if thinking that Phil is him brings him comfort, then he has no moral qualms about pretending.

"Yeah," Phil says in his best English. "It's me."

"Sam," Tommy says, endlessly relived, leaning further into Phil's hands. "I'm glad you're here, I wanted to talk to you."

"Yeah?" Phil says, ignoring the way the crew stares at his back with wide, worried eyes. "What about?"

"The aliens took more- took more things from me," Tommy breathes. Phil hears Wilbur's breath catch in his throat from behind him.

"Oh?" Phil asks, careful to keep his voice free of sorrow. "Are you okay?"

"...I'm okay," Tommy says after a long pause. He tugs Phil's sleeve to pull the captain closer, and though Tommy is too weak to corral Phil to do anything right now, he leans forward. "I have to tell you a secret," Tommy says in a whisper that is so loud that everyone in the room can hear it without straining their ears.

"What is it?" Phil asks, voice calm though his body vibrates with nervousness.

"I said they could," Tommy whispers. "I know you said to fight back, but- but these aliens are *nice* aliens." The human says, patting Phil's shoulders reassuringly. Phil swallows past the sudden lump in his throat and opens his mouth to start talking, but Tommy cuts him off. "I know you worry about me all the time cause I'm the youngest, but the aliens I found are really nice." Tommy swallows thickly. "I wasn't even that scared. I was- I was nervous for a little bit, when they gave me the numbing gas, but then I just fell asleep."

"That's good," Phil hums, running his hands through Tommy's hair, hoping the human is too out of it to notice that Phil doesn't have human hands.

"Why don't you come visit sometime? I haven't seen you in forever..."

Phil has a feeling he knows what happened to Sam, and by the chorus of tense sounds from behind him, he would guess the rest of the crew does too.

"Maybe one day," Phil breathes. Tommy hums, satisfied, and then goes silent. Phil thinks he's fallen asleep again, but after a few seconds, he speaks.

"I miss you a lot," He whispers, a real whisper this time, likely brought by exhaustion. "But I'm okay. I thin- I *know* I'm safe now. I don't think I've ever had that before."

"I'm glad," Phil breathes, voice shaking with barely concealed emotion. "You sound tired."

"I *am* tired," Tommy grumbles. "You're the one yapping my ear off, Sam." Phil huffs in amusement and pulls the blanket up around Tommy's shoulders.

"Go to sleep, mate," Phil mutters. Tommy cracks an eye open, glaring at him suspiciously.

"Will you still be here when I wake up?" Tommy asks. Phil winces internally. He knows Tommy thinks he's talking to Sam, and Tommy's dead friend (?) will certainly not be at his bedside when he wakes up next.

But Phil *will* be. So will the rest of his family, all waiting to dote on him to an insufferable degree until he recovers.

Phil smooths Tommy's hair back and kisses his forehead. Or, at least the best approximation he can do without traditional human lips. He really just bonks Tommy's forehead with his face and makes a clicking noise, but it's good enough.

"Of course," Phil trills. Tommy's face relaxes, and the human drifts off again, breathing deep and even.

When Phil turns, his crew looks all varying levels of emotional. Wilbur has an expression on his face like he's just been absolved of every sin he's ever committed, and to him, he may as well have been. Tubbo has a rare gentle expression, a warmth in his eyes that lacks the wild passion Phil has grown used to. Ranboo nearly matches, holding his head up to avoid tears that will worsen the scars on his face. Tubbo moves to soak them up with his coat sleeve. Techno- well, Techno just looks kind of constipated.

Regardless, they're here. They're together, and for now, at least, Tommy is calm and sleeping.

That has to be enough.

After

Chapter Summary

very soft.

also the last chapter of if it bleeds :]

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy sleeps for several hours after that, though none of the others do, too riled up by his last bout of consciousness. They chat among themselves, careful to keep their voices low enough to not wake the human again. Even with his increased rate of healing as compared to the rest of his crew, he's going to be out of commission for a long while after this, and sleep is going to be his greatest asset.

Of course, Tommy never does what's best for himself, and wakes up again after only four hours of sleep. The crew is immediately nervous, all worried for more drugged-out admissions of terror, but though he remains dizzy and muttering, he seems much more cheerful. Wilbur is the first to find this out, standing near the bed when Tommy awakes and being dragged into a one-armed hug from behind, making the phantling shriek in terror. Tommy grumbles when Wilbur tries to struggle out of his grip, and he doesn't have the heart to pull out of the hug, not after he had feared for Tommy's life the way he had.

"Are you awake, Tommy?" Tubbo asks after a chattering bout of laughter at Wilbur's predicament.

"Mm," Tommy confirms, squeezing Wilbur tighter. "I'm glad you're here."

A buzz of concern runs down Tubbo's back, remembering Tommy's ramblings when he had briefly woken up and thought that Phil was his dead cellmate. If the same thing is happening again then he doesn't know how Tommy is going to react when he finds out who they really are.

"Tommy, do you know who we are?" Phil asks gently, likely thinking the same thing as Tubbo.

"Yeah," Tommy murmurs, hiding his face in Wilbur's poncho. "Space family." He says in English. Tubbo lets out a relieved breath, wings sinking as he relaxes. He at least is aware of who they are, and Tubbo is *definitely* going to hold being called his 'space family' over his head when he's back to normal.

"...Is this new?" Tommy mutters, muffled by Wilbur's poncho.

"Yeah," Wilbur says with an amused trill, watching as Tommy sleepily rolls the tassles in between his finger and thumb. "It's nice," Tommy sighs.

"Do you know where you are?" Techno asks, apparently unable to stand any sort of emotional tenderness.

"Mm, hospital," Tommy says. It's close enough that none of them correct him. "Come lay with me."

"We cant kiddo," Phil says, wings twitching with barely controlled restraint to drag Tommy into the nest. "We don't want to tear your stitches." Tommy scrunches his face up in distaste.

"But I don't feel good," Tommy complains. "All- all woozy and shit."

"I know," Wilbur sighs. "You lost a lot of blood, and it's not like we have an ample supply of humans to get blood from to replace it."

"Better than one of your organs exploding," Tubbo says, sitting on the edge of Tommy's bed, ignoring the disappointed chirp from Phil that the apisaid had left the nest. "Why in the *world* would that be how your body functions."

Tommy hums something that may have been 'I don't know' and reaches blindly for Tubbo, making grabbing motions. Tubbo slots a hand into Tommy's and the human hums in satisfaction, falling back against his pillow.

With one hand tangled in the fabric of Wilbur's new poncho and the other wrapped around Tubbo's hand, Tommy falls back into the gentle lull of sleep. Tubbo follows not long after, something anxious and ugly within him settled by the warmth of Tommy's hand in his. He's close enough to hear his breathing, no longer stuttering and tight with pain. Tubbo feels Ranboo wrap his tail around his arm, an eagerness to be involved in what may be the universe's most gentle cuddle pile.

With both his best friends healthy, safe, and by his side, Tubbo can finally rest easy.

"I'm just saying, you already had me under, you could have at least given me a laser eye or something," Tommy grumbles from where he is propped up on a stack of pillows. There is a tray of food on his lap that will be gentle on his stomach. The combined nausea of both the painkillers, antibiotics, and the residual nausea of his appendicitis has made very little of what Tommy has eaten in the past three days *stay* eaten.

"If I knew how to do cybernetics I wouldn't be doing drug synthesis on a pirate ship," Wilbur says from where he lays on the floor, tail flicking lazily.

"Since when are we pirates?" Ranboo asks, looking up from his journal that he's been scribbling in for the past half hour. Phil clicks in nervous amusement.

"We're not pirates," Phil says, nudging Wilbur with the tip of his wing. "Stop lying to the kids to sound cool."

Techno chuffs in amusement before covering it up with a cough.

"Lame," Tubbo complains. "I'd love to be a space pirate."

"You watch too many movies," Phil chirps.

"You have movies in space?" Tommy gasps, sitting up so quickly he nearly knocks his tray to the floor. Tubbo steadies it with a muttered curse so Tommy doesn't spill leaf-water all over his lap.

"Yes, stop moving around you're gonna spill."

"Why did no one tell me this?" Tommy asks in mock rage. "It's like a sickness rite of passage to watch bad movies while you recover."

"That's what you said about your leaf-water too," Techno huffs.

"It's called *tea*, thank you very much," Tommy says, crossing his arms. "And it *is* a rite of passage. *Everyone* drinks tea when they're sick, it heals you."

"I really don't think spices and water is going to heal your removed organ any faster," Wilbur says.

"You're not a doctor," Tommy scoffs.

"I literally was the one who *did* the surgery you gremlin!" Wilbur says incredulously, flipping over onto his stomach to glare at Tommy.

"*Okay*, do you have your doctorate?" Tommy asks, putting his hands on his hips. Wilbur stays silent, lips pursing. "That's what I thought, bitch."

"Phil, go get a projector so Tommy can get his human recovery checklist done," Techno says, throwing a balled-up piece of paper at their captain. Phil whistles something that may be a

curse and gets to his feet, stretching out his wings.

"People used to respect me, you know," Phil says with a pointed look.

"But aren't you so much happier now?" Tubbo asks with a shit-eating grin, swinging his legs off the end of the bed. Phil hesitates for a moment in his stride to get the projector, his eyes scrunching up into little upturned crescents.

"Yeah," He says warmly. "I am."

A pillow hits him in the face almost immediately after he speaks.

"Ewww," Tommy yells. "Don't get all sappy captain."

"I take it back," Phil chortles. "I'm quitting captaining to spend full time with my wife. Tubbo is in charge."

"You have a *wife*?" Tommy asks at the same time Tubbo cheers.

"There's a lot of things you don't know about me," Phil says with a stilted wink, a gesture he's learned from Tommy but hasn't *quite* gotten down yet. The elytrian sweeps out of the room and the door slides shut behind him.

"I can't believe Phil has a wife before I do," Tommy grumbles, taking an angry bite of his toast.

"He is like... nineteen times your age. He's had a *lot* more time to find someone." Wilbur points out.

"How fucking old is he?" Tommy shrieks.

"Like... three-hundred-something. I don't know- elytrians live a *long* time."

"Fuck me, he's an old bat." Tommy sighs, laying back against his pillows.

"Don't call Phil an old bat," Techno says distractedly, still engrossed in the book he's reading.

"Who's an old bat?" Phil asks from the doorway, making Tommy jump.

"Oh nobody," Tommy says with a toothy grin. "Do you have the movies?"

"Yes, yes, but an old bat like me wouldn't be able to work the projector so I guess we'll have to skip movies," Phil says with a deep sigh.

"No, no!" Tommy says around a laugh, reaching his arms out to grab the projector out from Phil's arms. "I'm sorry, you're not old, you're a right spring chicken!"

"I'll choose to take that as a compliment," Phil says, setting the projector down on a counter. "What do you guys want to watch?"

"I get to pick since I was the one who had to have surgery," Tommy sings, stretching a hand out for the stack of thin sheets of plastic that held the movies' code.

"You won't even know any of these movies," Ranboo points out, dodging a pillow thrown at him by Tommy.

"Are you saying I'm not cultured?" Tommy says with a mocking gasp.

"Have you *ever* seen a movie from anywhere but Earth?" Techno asks, flipping a page in his book.

"I'm not one for foreign films, too high-brow for my taste," Tommy says, taking the stack of movies from Phil's arms.

After a brief synopsis of each film given by his begrudging crew, Tommy decides on a movie about a man of a species called a bellage falling in love with someone of a rivaling species, called the skildive. It is apparently based on a legend that is very popular in space, and though Tommy is not exactly privy to the urban legends of deep space, he's happy to learn.

Or, he would have been, had he not been so tired. He falls asleep against Wilbur's shoulder only ten minutes into the movie, before the two main characters have even met. None of them get up to turn the movie off, as dull as it is, and they all slip into sleep one after another until Wilbur remains the only one awake. Once he sees that the rest of his crew is asleep, the phantling nudges Tommy in the shoulder to wake him. Tommy stirs with a displeased murmur.

"Hey, wake up," Wilbur whispers. "I want to show you something."

That gets Tommy's attention at least, and he raises his head and blinks blearily at Wilbur.

"What?"

In lieu of an answer, Wilbur rolls over and opens a drawer in the nightstand. He rummages around for a few seconds before pulling out a small jar that is sloshing with liquid. Tommy gasps before even fully seeing it, having a good idea of what the jar contains.

"Oh my God, you *didn't* ," Tommy says with a mischievous smile. Wilbur smiles back, sharp teeth glinting in the overhead lights.

"I did," He confirms. "Here, take it."

Wilbur hands him the jar of pure alcohol that contains his removed appendix, the small nub of tissue floating lazily in the liquid. It looks so innocent you would never have been able to guess the trouble it had caused.

"I'm gonna put this on my shelf and freak Tubbo out with it," Tommy says, shaking the jar up and down.

"Good luck," Wilbur says with an amused click. "Tubbo would think it was cool. You'd have a better chance of freaking out Ranboo."

"Mm, a good point," Tommy says around a yawn.

"Go back to bed, child," Wilbur says, ruffling Tommy's hair. "The sooner you're better the sooner you can go back to terrorizing us all."

"That's my job," Tommy says distantly, already falling back asleep. Wilbur lays down next to him, not far behind.

"That it is, gremlin," Wilbur says, pulling Tommy's blankets up around his shoulders. "That it is."

The movie carries on, drama and love triangles playing for no one in the room full of sleeping bodies, providing soothing background noise. A jar full of alcohol pure enough to kill all but one of them sits on a nightstand, and inside is an appendix that nearly tore apart the crew. They are alive, their bodies still warm and their chests still rising and falling.

Tomorrow will come for all of them. They will have breakfast and try Tommy's leaf-water, and despite all of their complaining, they will all sneak into the kitchen to have some when no one is watching. They will live, they will keep living.

The woman drifting in everything and nothing will make sure of that. She wants her husband happy, after all.

Chapter End Notes

This is the end of this installement! There will be more from this universe, so don't worry about that.

End Notes

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